



Whip Round Up

From the Office of the Assistant Democratic Leader



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Week in Review

- **Democrats Unveil Tax Cut Plan** – This week the Senate Democrats called for an economic plan targeted towards the lower and middle class. The plan would stimulate the economy by including immediate tax cuts of \$300 for each working adult and an additional \$300 for each of the first two children in a family with an increase in the tax credit per child to \$800. Additionally, the Democratic plan would eliminate the marriage penalty tax and provide small businesses with tax cuts in order to help them to provide health care benefits and buy new equipment. The plan would also give \$40 billion directly to state and city governments and would extend unemployment benefits. This plan would cost \$152 billion over the next decade and help more working families than the \$441 billion tax cut package that emerged from the Senate Finance Committee on Thursday.

- **US Senate Expands NATO Treaty** – In a unanimous vote, the Senate voted this week to add the following seven Eastern European nations to NATO: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. The addition of these countries will strengthen the North Atlantic alliance and improve relationships world-wide. The U.S. is the third of the 19-member NATO countries that must approve their addition to the alliance.

- **Lowest Number of Vacancies on Federal Bench** – While Senate Democrats successfully continue to filibuster both Miguel Estrada, nominated to the D.C. Circuit, and Pricilla Owens, nominated to the U.S. Circuit Court for the Fifth Circuit many more judges continue to be confirmed. Three additional judges were confirmed by the Senate this week alone: Deborah Cook to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit, Ceilia Altonaga, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Florida, and John Roberts, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the D.C. Circuit. Thus, Democratic Leader Tom Daschle remarked that over 125 federal judicial vacancies have been filled in two years, an approval rate of 98.2 percent. Out of all the judges nominated, Daschle remarked, "[w]e've opposed two: Mr. Estrada, because he's been unwilling to provide the information that most of the nominees provide, if not all of them, and Ms. Owen, in large measure because she has continually insisted on putting her own views ahead of the law."

- **Senate Amends FISA Bill to Help in Fight Against Terrorism** – The Senate amended the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (FISA) to extend the meaning of "agent of a foreign power" to any person --other than a U.S. person-- that engages in international terrorism or activities in preparation for them. Currently, when the FBI seeks to obtain a warrant, it must show that the targeted person is an agent of a known foreign power or terrorist group. This bill removes that requirement in order to help the FBI secure FISA warrants which authorize the electronic surveillance of communications between and among foreign powers.



Reid's Words...on Mother's Day

"One issue all Democrats and Republicans agree on is the importance of mothers, and it is our hope that all moms enjoy a Happy Mother's Day this Sunday."



Senator Reid congratulates Nevada Mother of the Year, Elaine Taylor Hardy, and Nevada Young Mother of the Year, Carole Gates. Hardy and Gates were in Washington, D.C. with American Mothers, Inc., the official Mothers' Day organization.

Reid for Nevada

Reid and Ensign Investigate Scientific Studies at Yucca Mountain

- Senators Harry Reid and John Ensign will hold a Senate hearing in Las Vegas regarding allegations that scientific studies conducted at Yucca Mountain are flawed. Current and former employees, contract managers and experts at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission have provided reports suggesting that the studies are unsound.

Reid Connects with Nevada Students

- Senator Reid hosted a live "Capitol to Classroom" internet chat with fifth graders at Paradise Professional Development School. As part of an ongoing series of internet chats, the event facilitates dialogue between students, educators, and the Senator on important issues affecting Nevada.

Working with Nevadans

- With the energy bill on the floor of the Senate this week, Carl Pope, Executive Director of the Sierra Club, met with Senator Reid to discuss ways to strengthen the bill for a cleaner environment in Nevada.
- Representatives of the Northern Nevada Builders Association visited Senator Reid to discuss a number of issues including securing a home ownership tax credit, helping small business provide health insurance to their workers, and helping Nevada builders secure military housing construction contract.
- Judy Nagel and Bill Blazvick of the Mechanical Electrical Sheet Metal Alliance met with Senator Reid to stress the importance of providing workers with wages that compare to regional standards on federal contracts.
- Senator Reid recognized Prudential Youth Volunteer awardees Holly Adamson, Las Vegas, and Kristal DeRuijs, Sparks, for their commitment to their community.
- Gail Allen, Theresa Merrill, and Denna Devenberg of the Breast Cancer Coalition of Nevada thanked Senator Reid for his leadership on the Breast Cancer and Environmental Leadership Act.
- Nevada nurses Bonnie Boisselle and Karen Hankin met with Senator Reid to discuss issues concerning the Service Employees International Union. They stressed the need to eliminate mandatory overtime for nurses and to adopt safe staffing ratios of nurses to patients.
- Senator Reid congratulated Nevada emergency medical service personnel honoree, Tricia Klein, on her award.

INSIDER'S CALENDAR, May 12-16

- **Monday, 2:00 pm** - Senate convenes and proceeds to the Reconciliation bill
- **No Roll Call Votes will occur on Monday**
- **Tuesday, approx. 12:00 noon** - Roll Call Vote
- **Other possible legislation:** Tax bill, Energy bill, Debt Limit, Global HIV/AIDS bill, and judicial nominations